1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

Cacao is in great demand. The delicious sub-acid pulp is first sucked from the beans, which are roasted and ground on the chicha board, or stone into a coarse paste. It is the greatest luxury they possess. And still, I have never seen a young cacao tree belonging to an Indian. They depend for their supply on the old trees, planted by past generations. I have known an Indian make a two days' journey to collect a little cacao, when less labor would plant him fifty trees near his house. 222 272

Fishing is rarely performed with hook and line. They have two methods. One is to shoot the fish from a canoe (all the canoes belong to foreigners), or from the shore, or a rock. They use very long arrows, described previously, and are quite expert. Another method is to select a channel of the river beside an island. A frame-work is built at each end, of sticks and cane, which extend completely across the stream. When everything is ready, the people stationed at the upper end rapidly cover the frame-work with the leaves of the cane, so as to stop the water running through. Those at the lower frame, also spread on cane leaves, but thinner, only so as to keep the fish from passing through. Both parties must work at the same time, and as rapidly as possible, because as soon as the fish find the level of the water lowering they attempt to escape, and I was told that it has sometimes happened that every fish has gotten away before the dams were finished. In the course of a few hours the water is so low that the fish congregate in the deeper pools and are shot with arrows, or even taken out by hand. 226

The only divisions of time known are the natural astronomical ones: the day, the lunar month, and the year. A glance at the vocabulary will show that special words are used for day in the abstract as distinguished from night, and for to-day, to-morrow, day after to-morrow, &c., and for yesterday, &c. The month is called by the same name as the moon, "*si.*" The year is counted from dry season to dry season, and is recognized by the ripening of the flower-stalks of the wild cane, on which they depend for arrow-shafts. It is called *da-was'* from this connection. 805

The local diseases of the country are fevers, acquired by going to the coast; or by the hill people, by going down to the low lands. They sometimes seem to become epidemic, due to an unusually wet season, or to the continuance of the rains throughout what should be a dry season. The summer of 1874 was particularly fatal in this respect. Rheumatism is common, especially with the older men. It is brought on by much exposure to rain, and by wading rivers when heated, on journeys. But the commonest infirmities are indolent ulcers, usually on the legs. They originate from any little scratch or bruise, and are the result of the low vital state of the system, due to a bulky but innutritious diet. A wound which, in a person in good health, would heal in a week, may result with one of these people in a sore lasting years, and perhaps at times involving an area twice as large as the hand. 164

Of remedies, they may be safely said to have none. They are learning 757

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19

757 to apply to the traders for medicines for fever. All go to Mr. Lyon in case of snake-bite, and when taken in time, he says he has never failed to cure a case with either ammonia or iodine, as seemed to be indicated. It may be interesting to note that after obtaining no relief with one of these medicines, he has given the other, and with immediate good results. He gives the iodine in the form of alcoholic tincture in 10 to 15-drop doses, every 10 to 15 minutes. Some of them seem to believe in the incantations of the *Awas* or doctors, but foreign medicines are gradually gaining ground over sorcery. For rheumatic pains, headaches, &c., there are two remedies used. The simplest is counter-irritation by whipping with nettle leaves. The other is bleeding. The lancet is made usually from the tongue of a jew's-harp, broken off at the angle and sharpened to a point. This is set at right angles in a little stick for a handle, and is used by holding it over the affected part and striking it briskly with a finger. They never regularly open a vein and draw off a quantity of blood, but every stroke makes a separate puncture, from which only a few drops exude. At Borubeta I saw a man bled to relieve the aching of fatigue in his arms. He had been scraping *agave* leaves, to extract the fibre for hammocks. He had at least fifty punctures made over his two arms.

222 439 314 The natural products of the country are principally sarsaparilla root and India rubber. The sarsaparilla vine is green, angular, and covered with thorns. It grows very long and climbs over bushes and even trees in the more open parts of the forest. At short distances it is jointed, and if it touches the ground every joint sends out a new set of roots. The leaves are large and acuminately oval and have three longitudinal ribs, the midrib and two parallel ones, half way between the middle and the edge. The fruit is round and grows in a cluster something like grapes. The vine has a tap-root, and besides sends out a large number of horizontal roots near the surface of the ground, and from six to ten feet long. The sarsaparilla hunter first clears away carefully all the bushes and undergrowth with his machete. He then, with a hooked stick, digs into the ground at the base of the vine until he loosens the earth and finds where the best roots are. The tap-root is never disturbed, and it is customary to dig up only half the roots at a time, to avoid killing the vine. Having selected those that look most promising, he places his hand under one or two and gently lifting them, follows their course with his hooked stick, loosening the soil and lifting them out, following them to their ends. They are then cut off, the dirt carefully replaced around the vine, and the roots laid in the sun, or hung up to dry. A vine yields generally from four to nine pounds of green roots. When dry they are tied into cylindrical rolls a foot long and four or five inches thick, weighing about a pound.

India rubber is obtained by scoring the bark of the trees obliquely. Several cuts are placed one above another and in pairs converging downwards; the sap being directed in its flow by a leaf placed at the bottom, which serves as a spout, to direct it into the vessel placed to receive it.

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

sometimes used. This is scraped over the rings with a large hard bean-like seed. It at least helps to add to the noise, if it does not contribute melody. A little flute, about as musical as a penny whistle, is sometimes added to the concert, though it seems rather to be looked upon as a toy. These flutes are made of a bone of some bird, perhaps a pelican. The bone has half-a-dozen holes drilled in it, and the end is plugged with wax, so as to direct the air to the larger aperture near the end. I bought one from a Tiribi made of a deer's bone. 534

"On very solemn occasions a curious box is also used. It is about eight inches long by four square on the end. It is carved out hollow, with a long tongue on one face, isolated by a U-shaped slit. A heavy handle is attached to one end, also carved out of the same block. When used, it is simply struck on the above mentioned tongue with a bone or piece of hard stick. This is only used on the death of a chief. There is but one in the tribe, and no bribe that I could offer sufficed to buy it."

Cacique Sticks.—These are long, cane-like staves, made of a dark, hard, heavy, reddish-brown wood called "cacique". As a rule they are entirely plain, but pl. XVII, *b*, exhibits an example of a type, now said to be obsolete, that has the figure of a man rudely carved on the handle. These canes are highly regarded, because of certain 293 [532] [757]

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

293 astringent properties said to be contained
●757 in the wood, and they are sometimes scraped and the scrapings drunk with water as a curative. It is supposed to stop bleeding, and is also valued for intestinal ailments.
[622] Formerly they may have been the property only of the headmen.

293 A stick once owned by Ramón's father, the old "king," was in the custody of Señor Alejo Jimenez, governor of Talamanca, who lives at Saporio. It was taken by the Bribri from a neighboring tribe, probably the Tiribi, in war, many years ago, and the Indians are very anxious lest it should pass out of their hands, since they say, "it cost us blood." This staff was seen by Gabb,[16] who states:

[532] "It is a staff of hard black palm wood, over four feet long. The top is carved in the shape of an animal, not unlike a bear sitting on his haunches. But there are no bears in this country, and it must have been intended for some other animal. Below this figure the stick is square, and is carved out into four pillars several inches long, with spaces between them. In the interior, between them, is a cavity in which a loose piece of the same wood can be shaken about. It was evidently left there in the carv-

252 palms are boiled and fried. Another generally liked food is the tender leaf of the bean vine. This is prepared either with eggs or in soup.

Meat, fowl, and fish are frequently wrapped in the leaves of the *bijagua* (*Calathea insignis* Petersen). Another *Calathea* known as "black *bijagua*" is used interchangeably with the first kind. The food wrapped in the leaves is roasted on the hearth stones. There are various ways, however, of preparing different meats. Armadillo is often boiled or fried. Domestic and wild pig and venison are placed on top of three or four sticks over the hearth stones and roasted. Sometimes the flesh of these animals [251] is sun-dried and salted, or is smoked for preservation. Beef is almost never eaten, as the cattle the *Boruca* possess are not numerous and are in the hands of a very few; besides, since they are used for traction, they are economically too important to eat (see p. 23). Posole is a common dish and is made of dried meat, usually wild pig. The meat is chopped fine and cooked with corn. The combination is then ground. If this is boiled every night, it keeps for many days.

Shell fish is boiled, but fish, other than shell fish, is seldom eaten fresh. When it is, however, it is put into a soup, or roasted in leaves, or fried. As a rule the fish is cut into three [251] pieces and salted to be eaten when needed. If salt is not available, the fish is smoked and saved. Smoked fish is said to be excellent for [757] diarrhea.

372 Fire-making. The majority of the *Boruca* use matches, although a few of the older people occasionally use two sticks to start a fire. This is accomplished by taking a stick of pejibaye and rubbing it around and around in a small hole in a stick of *guácimo* (*Guazuma ulmifolia* Lam.), until sparks set the *guácimo* on fire. Some of the elders still talk of the stones which were formerly rubbed together to start fire, using a piece of cotton as a wick. These are not seen today.

In the bush, or in the fields, fire, which is all important among the *Boruca* for clearing purposes, is kept in an old tree trunk from day to day. This is done by throwing ashes over and around the fire to keep the embers hot and alive, much as is done in New England fireplaces at present.

Miscellaneous. Candles are made from wax of the *jicote*, a wild bee, and from the wax of the wild wasps. Clothes are washed with *jaboncillo* (*Leguminosae* sp.). This is a vine which grows near the river Diquis. The roots only are used, and are cut into pieces and mashed. When mixed with water, suds are produced, and it is an effective cleansing agent. Brooms are made of fern leaves tied to wooden handles. Cocoa-butter is found in every Boruca household. The women rub it in their hair so their hair will shine. It also has a common use as a salve for certain remedies, such as boils or sores on the legs. To make the butter, the cacao bean is toasted and then boiled. The grease rises to the top, and then is skimmed off and put on a *bijagua* leaf (see p. 9), or in a gourd, to cool and to solidify. The liquid remaining in the pot is drunk. This is called *tivia* in Spanish and *kao* in the Boruca tongue.

MEASUREMENTS OF TIME

moon as well as by the calendar of the *ladinos*. Most of the Indians have no conception of their age. The numeral count of these people runs from one to eight, Spanish being used for the remaining numbers. Foodstuffs are measured by hand-fulls or by gourds. There does not appear to be indigenous methods for weighing.

CYCLE

8). The end of the cord is burned with *tocolote*, the colored cotton. White cotton is not used. The cut part is buried where the child is born. In cases when the cord is slow to fall off the infant, the dust from the *bajareque* of the house wall is mixed with cinnamon and applied to the babe. After birth, the child is bathed in the liquid remaining from boiling three plants. One is a grass which grows in the savanna and is called *trik-kra'*. This is a very fine grass that has a little root resembling *tiquisqui* and yellow blossoms. The other plant grows by streams and is called *tʃu-kra'*. Pittier does not mention *trik-kra'* but cites *tsbu-krá*,[83] and gives the same use for it. Standley,[84] following Pit-

[83] Pittier, 1888, p. 93.
[84] Standley, 1937, p. 761, pt. II.

278 842 sembling that of Castoreum remained. This odor is possibly derived from glands of some tropical animal since beavers do not occur there.

The tannins would indicate that some bark or barks were used in the preparation. Microscopical examination of the residue did not give any clues.

[171] A few places where such practices as these are known are Africa, the Fiji Islands, and Ecuador.

278 757 The following is a list of the more generally known cures used by the *Boruca* and usually prescribed by the *curandera*.

Malaria is treated by drinking the liquid left from cooking the bark of a tree called *hombre grande* (*Quassia amara* L.), and sometimes, from boiling the fruits of the *cedrón* (*Simaba Cedron* Planch.)

For stomach-aches, a vine called in Boruca *so-kra'* (*Philodendron* sp.) is boiled with the ever useful *Kųikʃ-as* (*Piper* spp.), and drunk.

Dysentery in adults is treated by boiling the bark of the María tree, the guava tree, the leaves and the yuca-like root of the *contrayerva* (*Dorstenia Contrajerva* L.), and the ripe vanilla pod (*Vanilla fragrans* [Salisb] Ames).

Rheumatism is treated by rubbing the afflicted parts with the oil of the copaiba tree.

To stop boils, the leaves of the *kana kra'* (*Conostegia extinctoria* [Bonpl.] D. Don.) are used in combination with a lard made from the marrow of the leg bones of a cow and lemon juice. The lard helps to keep the leaves in place, and is supposed to aid in drawing out the poison.

752 278 For snake bites, some Indians, but not all, as the majority go to a *sukia* for this, use the leaf of the *guaco* (*Mikania Guaco* Humb. & Bonpl.). They mash the leaf, soak it in water, and then put it on the afflicted parts. Another remedy for snake bites is to use the bulb or root of the *Strychnos* or *curarina* vine (*Strychnos toxifera* Schonb. ex Benth.). This is cut into pieces and mixed with the *guaco* leaf and boiled very well. The resulting liquid is drunk. The most effective remedy for snake bites, however, seems to be the resin from the *caraña* tree (*Protium* spp.). This tree grows on the coast, particularly near Dominical. The resin is mixed with honey and is both drunk and applied to the bite.

439 The principal items are lemons, which bring
[435] ₡8.00[141] per 100; oranges at ₡10.00 per 100; alligator pears, from ₡0.20–0.25 each; and yuca at ₡10.00 per quintal.[142] The sums received are generally spent on cheap cotton cloth for dresses; shirts and trousers; combs for adorning the hair; iron cooking vessels; guns and gun powder; patented medicines, etc.

464 The people on the Pacific watershed work temporarily as day laborers in Potrero Grande and Buenos Aires. They earn on the average of
[465] ₡5.50 per day clearing pasture lands, felling trees, etc. The Bribri sell net bags to non-
439 Indians in the nearby settlements at a cost of
435 ₡2.00; hammocks at ₡15.00; agave rope (*see* Fibers) at ₡0.25 a coil, ₡0.50 a twist. Maize brings ₡2.00 a *cajuela;*[143] yuca ₡0.15 to ₡0.70 a pound; garlic and tobacco ₡1.50 a pound; *pejibayes* are ₡0.10 a pound; bananas ₡1.50 a stem. Coffee, the most important cash crop, is sold almost exclusively by the Cabécares and brings around ₡1.00 a pound. Rice is ₡40.00 a quintal. Chickens sell from ₡0.50 up to ₡3.50. Eggs bring from ₡0.25 to ₡0.30 apiece. The size of the animal determines the price of pigs and cattle. The highest for swine, however, is ₡100.00 and for a steer ₡250.00.

RELIGION, MAGIC, ETC.

756 famous ones cross to this side of the range, or
177 in Salitre where some make their home. The
484 Indians themselves often go to Talamanca from the Pacific side because the Chinese and other merchants in Buenos Aires ask too much for
756 patent remedies. It should be remembered that
● 757 behind the fanfare and the to-be-expected magical covering or hocus-pocus of the medicine man, lies astute common sense. Strict diets
[262] are generally part of the cure. These include the prohibition of salt, coffee, chocolate, chicha, and, more often than not, meat. The
756 position is not hereditary although a medicine man's son can become one and frequently does. Study and knowledge of forest lore are requisites, and any bright boy who wants to study and has enough money or produce to pay a teacher can, with time, become a medicine

[142] This, in Costa Rica, represents 32 pounds.

758 house. The *pejibaye* has the advantage of thorns to keep innocent children from straying into trouble, as no one except the medicine man is allowed to touch the ill. Water is kept within reach of the sick person by suspending it in a gourd from a long stick.

826 753 Lehmann [147] pointed out that the liver was considered the key to all emotions, sickness, and health. This is still true. The Cabécar phrase for happy or the state of good health signifies that the liver is in good condition. [774] Lehmann further adds that the activities of the soul are connected with this organ.[148] On the whole, many fevers are supposed to be caused by the liver. Among the Bribri, however, influenza is credited to *hák-namą* (*see* Myths).

164 The principal complaints noted among these peoples are caused by intestinal parasites with subsequent anemia; conjunctivitis, especially among the Bribri; *papalomollo* or Leishmaniosis; and malaria, particularly in Talamanca. Measles, mumps, and at times smallpox and yellow fever also take a heavy toll when they occur in epidemic form.

839 Among the Cabécares, there are numerous cases of male perversion. No social stigma is attached nor is any cure attempted.

278 **Curing.** Herbs, vines, quinine bark, and other medicines prepared from flowers and berries are used.

752 824 A medicine for snake bites is made from *Dracontium Pittieri* Engl. and also from *Aristolochia sylvicola* Standley, which is mashed and cooked. This is combined with the bark of a tree called *bek* in Cabécar and is used to cause sterilization. Diets, as has been ● 757 noted, form a part of many cures although they are also observed at times of death by the *usegLa* clan. The principal ceremonial and 755 magical elements included in curing are songs 533 (prayers), always sung with the staff and the stones. One of the prayers the medicine men of Cabécar and some of the Bribri sing to [787] combat sickness and to foretell if the patient will live or die is given under the heading of *Sacred Songs*. To rid one of the *wimbLu*, the medicine man sings for three nights and asks *sibu* (*see* Theological Beliefs) not to allow the spirit to scare any more.

[147] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 282.
[148] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 282.

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duLi

(*Cabécar*)

* 539 312 ● 757 [262] In the upper Coen, there are hot water holes called *duLi*. These were left by *sibu* so the Cabécares could cure their sores. When they bathe here, they cannot touch meat or salt for fifteen days.

THE PEJIBAYE

(*Bribri*)

* 539 824 846 *sibu* gave the *pejibaye* to the first people who were called *kabLawak*. Because of this one has to bathe with the fruit after a child is born, and in the early morning, chew it up and spit it out.

(16) TOBACCO[200]

(*Bribri*)

* 539 276 [261] *sibu* was alone thinking and smoking when a little *gorrion* came and asked him what he was smoking and to give him some. *sibu* said that it was tobacco grown in Talamanca in the tobacco patch. That is why one can ask for tobacco. One cannot ask for food, however.

CACAO (CHOCOLATE)

(*Cabécar*)

* 539 776 *sibu* had four wives whose names were *siru*, *soro*, *tiŋə* and *spaLbu*. Most of them had their faults and did not make life easy for him. *soro* never wanted to cook the birds that *sibu* brought in from the hunt. *tiŋə* always moved her hammock far away. *spaLbu*, the most beautiful of all, always hung her hammock very high out of *sibu's* reach. In fact, the only wife who did everything he wanted and was always nice to him was *siru*, the ugly one.

Suddenly, however, *siru*, the ugly one, found herself transformed. *sibu* turned to her and said, "From now on, everyone will love you. You are the good one."

* 539 824 This is why there are four kinds of cacao in Costa Rica, and why the people of Talamanca call the best kind *siru* (*Theobroma cacao* L.). The *pataste* (*Theobroma bicolor*

[200] *See* Linguistic Texts: *dua* (tobacco).